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# Training mission back on track

Air Force Print News and Keesler News staff

Training in five key career fields resumed at Keesler Monday for 400 Airmen, six months sooner than base officials forecasted more than a week ago.

More students start training next week and others gradually enter training in the weeks that follow as the base continues to recover from the pounding it took from Hurricane Katrina.

According to Brig. Gen. William Lord, 81st Training Wing commander, Keesler's specialized instruction and equipment can't be replicated anywhere else in the Air Force, which is the driving

force behind the accelerated resumption of the base's training mission.

"One of the reasons we've accelerated our return to training is that it's the right thing to do — some of our training facilities received little damage at all," the general explained. "The second is that we're the only place in the Air Force that teaches many of these specialties, and a tremendous investment in infrastructure has already been made here.

"We have \$10 million air traffic control simulators not available anywhere else in the service," he pointed out. "We were careful to shelter all of that equip-

ment from the storm because of its value. We have to reconstitute that class — if we didn't, the Air Force wouldn't get any new air traffic controllers for many months.

"Another example is electronic principles — the very high-value test equipment suites already installed in some of our teaching facilities would cost millions of dollars to replicate," the general added.

Col. Jessie Canaday, 81st Training Group commander, said Air Force officials determined what training would start based on the service's critical needs.

Please see **Training**, Page 24

Staff Sgt. Veronica Logan, left, Altus Air Force Base, Okla., legal office, helps Staff Sgt. Jarvis Hardman, 81st Security Forces Squadron, file his claim for Hurricane Katrina. Claims are being accepted at temporary facilities in the Levitow Training Support Facility in the Triangle, but the office may be relocated to Locker House.

Photo by  
Kemberly Groue



## Damage, losses from Hurricane Katrina Those in need receive aid

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News staff

Keesler's recovery from Hurricane Katrina is being supported by a team of helping offices and agencies.

Before Katrina, Sablich Center was the hub for most assistance offices and programs, but the building was a casualty of the Aug. 29 storm, so offices have been relocated to the Levitow Training Support Facility, the former Chapel One and other sites.

Here's a rundown of available assistance.

### Housing

The housing office in Chapel One is reassigning homes to families whose base housing is uninhabitable.

For a list of available off-base housing, call Mary Krystosek, 377-9741.

The office is the focal point for military housing residents to request portable storage units or labor assistance.

### AAFES

The Triangle mini-mall in is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is waiving

interest and suspending monthly payments for an unspecified period to Exchange Credit Program cardholders displaced by Hurricane Katrina. A six-month no-interest, no-payment plan also applies to new purchases through Sept. 30, and \$500 credit limit increases are offered on accounts in good standing.

For more information or to update contact information, call 1-877-991-7827 or visit <http://www.aafes.com>.

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## General Lord receives assignment, praise for hurricane relief efforts

Brig. Gen. William Lord, 81st Training Wing commander, has been selected to become director of Information, Services and Integration, Secretary of the Air Force Office of Warfighting Integration and Chief Information Officer, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

General Lord, who was selected for promotion to major general in May, assumes the higher rank in the new position.

The general, a 1977 graduate of the Air Force Academy, has commanded the 81st TRW since April 2004. He commands 12,000 Airmen and civilians providing technical training for officers, enlisted and civilians of the Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves, as well as Department of Defense agencies.

"Bill Lord is a tremendous leader who has done wonderful things for the Keesler community," said Maj. Gen.

Loyd "Chip" Utterback, 2nd Air Force commander. "His response to the challenges of Hurricane Katrina has been nothing but brilliant.

"Local and state leaders are full of nothing but praise for his humanitarian and medical assistance to the local Mississippi communities in the hours and days following Hurricane Katrina's landfall," added General Utterback, who himself is preparing for a promotion and new assignment as

deputy commander of Pacific Air Forces, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

General Lord holds a bachelor's degree in biological and life sciences, and master's degrees in business administration and natural resource strategy. He's held various duties with tours in Europe, U.S. Central Command and the White House. He has commanded at the detachment, squadron, group and joint levels.

# You bet we're up to challenges ahead

By Brig. Gen. William Lord

81st Training Wing commander

As I said to a reporter who asked if Keesler is capable of a comeback from Hurricane Katrina, “You bet we are.”

Team Keesler, you’ve proved me right beyond even my wildest dreams. While you dealt, and continue to deal, with your personal losses, you’re constantly making Keesler better. Less than a month after taking a direct hit from this monster storm:

**We’re providing humanitarian aid** to our Mississippi Gulf Coast neighbors, many of whom have suffered greater losses than we.

## COMMENTARY

**We’ve resumed training** Airmen in several critical career fields which can’t be taught anywhere else but here.

**We’re continuing to deliver assistance** to our people who sustained damage and personal property losses.

**We’ve reopened several key facilities** where business is being conducted and services are being provided.

**We’re moving displaced military families** into

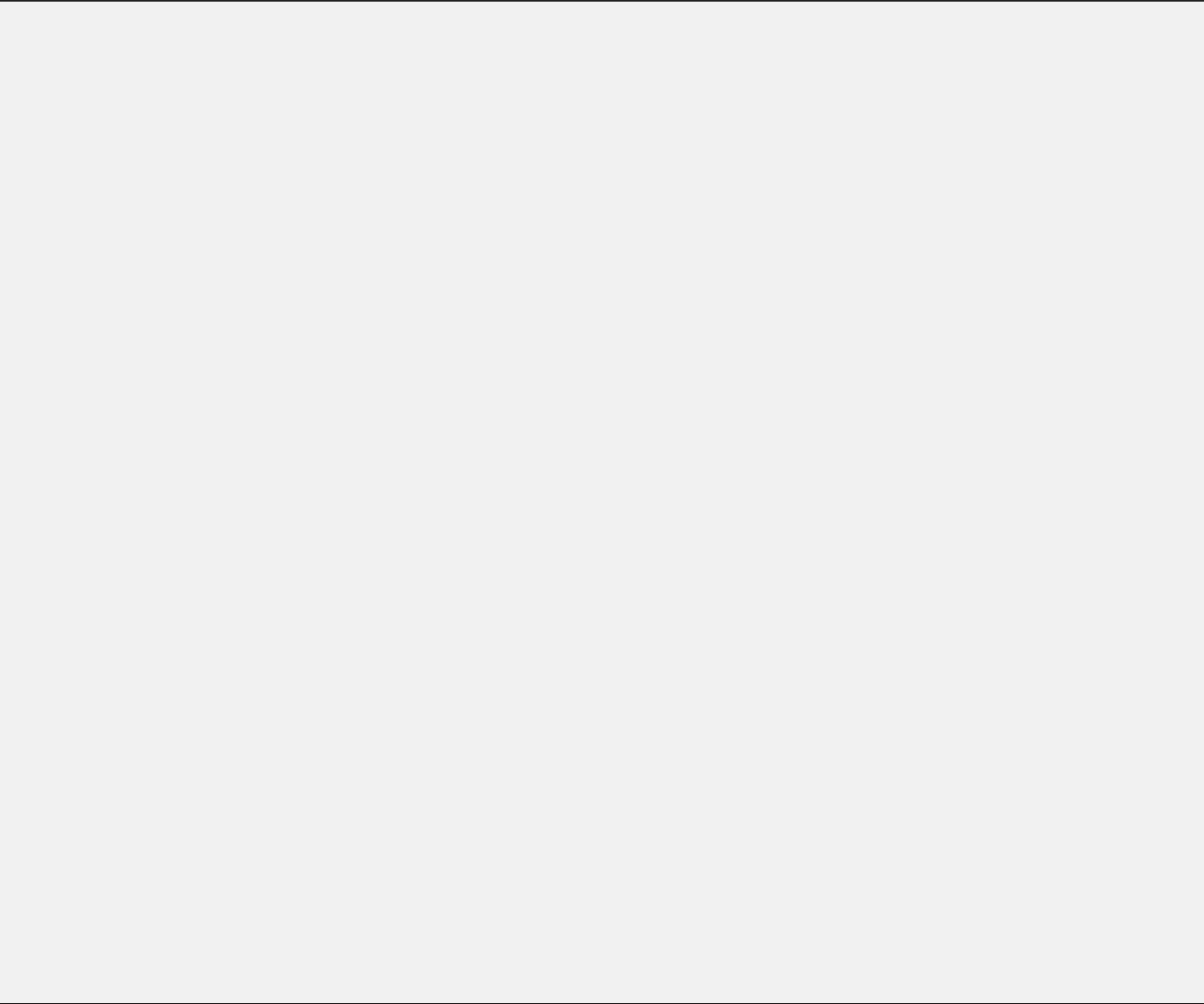
habitable base housing units, and providing lodging to those whose off-base homes are uninhabitable.

**We’ve cleaned up** and removed tons of debris from all across the base.

**We’re accommodating people** from our sister services, other federal agencies and private contractors here to help the coast.

Make no mistake, the challenges before us are herculean. Are we capable of meeting them? You bet we are.

I’m proud of our Air Force family and your perseverance and unselfish service to our nation and each other’s families. This is truly an “Operation Dragon Comeback.”



# KEESLER NEWS

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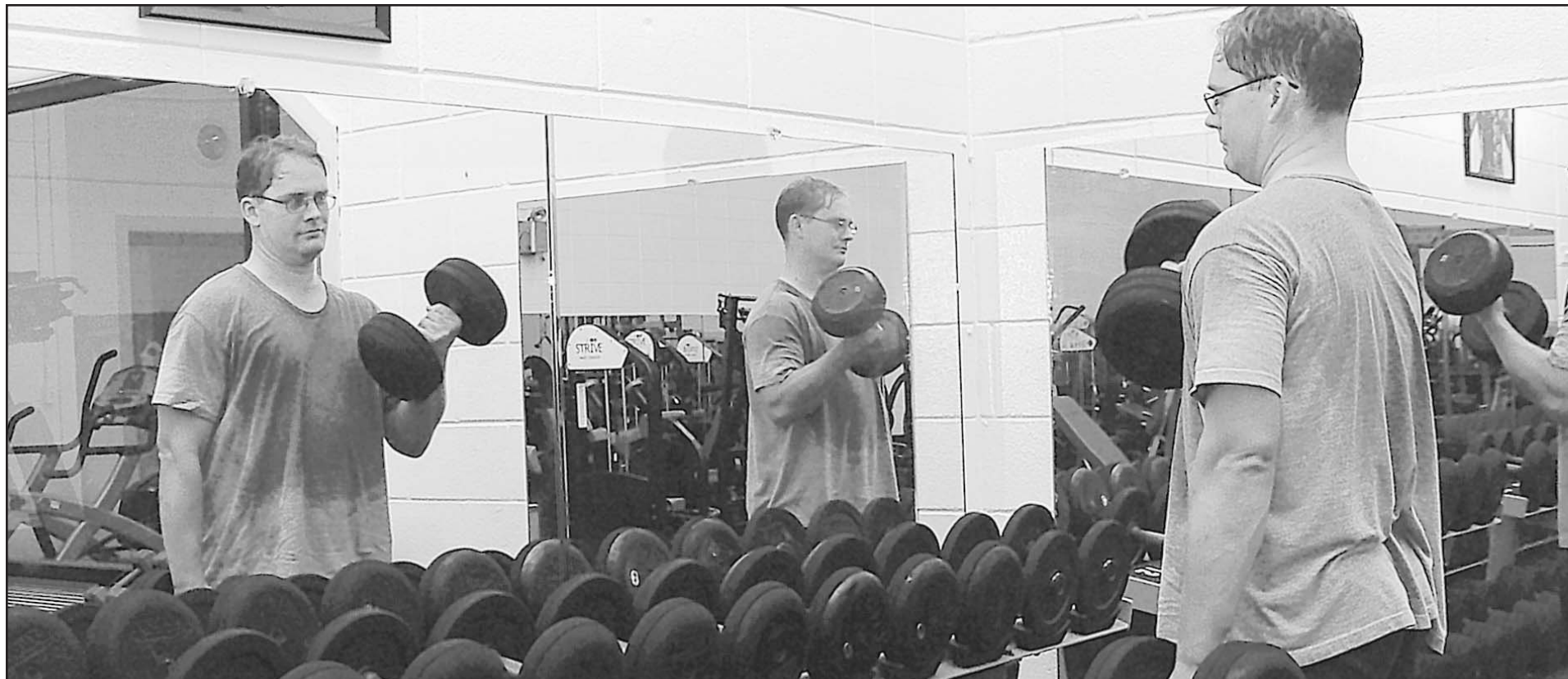
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Kemberly Groue

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Photos by Kemberly Groue

Maj. Kenn Norris works out at Blake Fitness Center. He's on temporary duty from Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, to support the 81st Medical Group.

## Base facilities rebound from Katrina's punch



Marie Lee, 81st SVD, prepares pancakes for breakfast at Azalea Dining Facility for Darryl Screven, a contractor with ITT Systems, and Staff Sgt. Kenny Grasle, 332nd Training Squadron.

By Senior Airman Sarah Stegman

Keesler News staff

As Keesler begins to recover from an estimated \$1 billion pounding by Hurricane Katrina, base facilities are reopening for business.

### AAFES

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service reopened the mini-base exchange only three days after the storm hit. It's now open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

AAFES is also gearing up to open furniture and military clothing sales stores.

The furniture store will be located on Hercules Drive near Ploesti Drive. It's expected to open by the end of the week, and hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Military clothing sales, located in the mini-mall on Ploesti, is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. starting Friday.

Retired military members can now use the mini-mall and service station from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily.

Other open facilities and times are:

**Service station** — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. gas, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. retail. Major credit cards are accepted 24 hours.

**Subway** — 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Telecenter** — 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Triangle barber shop** — 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Triangle laundry and dry cleaners** — noon to 6 p.m.

The main base exchange, dorm shoppette, Class Six/shoppette and medical center exchange are closed indefinitely.

### 81st Services Division

The 81st Services Division has started getting its facilities back on track as well:

**Child development center** is now open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., but has a new priority system in place.

The first is dual and single military who are mission-essential. Priority two is mission-essential military with civilian spouses who work at Keesler. The third priority is nonappropriated fund employees who can't come to work without child care and are considered mission essential.

**McBride Library** — 3 to 10 p.m. daily. A fax service is available for a nominal fee; videos and DVD movies available.

**Azalea and Magnolia dining facilities** — 5:30-8 a.m., 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 5 p.m.-8:30 p.m. daily.

A charge for meals for people not using meal cards or on field-feeding orders is now in effect.

For spouses and dependent children of active-duty personnel E-1 through E-4, breakfast is \$1.55 and lunch and dinner are \$3.

For personnel on temporary duty to Keesler drawing per diem, dependents of all other active-duty personnel, Defense Department employees, other federal employees at Keesler and base contract personnel, breakfast is \$1.90 and lunch and dinner are \$3.50.

**Fam camp** — available for mission-essential active-duty, civilian and contractors, and non-

Please see **Facilities**, Page 5

# Facilities,

from Page 4

mission essential active-duty who've been displaced. For more information, call 594-0543.

**Blake Fitness Center** — 6 a.m. to midnight daily. Aerobics classes are 11:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. starting next week on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

**Inns of Keesler** — open 24 hours.

**Muse Manor mini-mart** — 7 a.m. to midnight.

**Live Oak Dining Facility** — 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., students only.

**Vandenberg Community Center** — 3-10 p.m. Alcoholic beverages available 6-9 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

**Half Time Café** — 5-10 p.m.

**Auto skills center** — 1-7p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

**Enlisted lounge** — 5-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Alcoholic beverages available 6-9 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

**Keesler Community Center** — 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. workdays.

**Youth activities center** — 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. workdays.

**Gaudé Lanes** — 5-10 p.m. Monday-Friday; 3-10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

**McBride Library** — 3-10 p.m.

Bay Breeze Golf Course, Dragon and Triangle fitness centers, arts and crafts center, outdoor recreation, Pecan Dining Facility, Keesler Club and the information, ticket and travel office are closed.

## Commissary

The Keesler Commissary is closed indefinitely. The 81st Civil Engineer Squadron is converting the Keesler Community Center into a new one, but the expected completion date isn't available yet.

## Gates

Oak Park Gate has been opened, 5:30-7:30 a.m. and 3:30-5:30 p.m., to help alleviate traffic due to the closure of Highway 90. The Pass Road and White Avenue gates are open around the clock. The Judge Sekul Gate is closed.

## Mail

Mail is currently available for Harrison Court, Bay Ridge, Pine Haven and Oak Park residents in Building 901 on Fisher and Zero streets, behind Wall Studio and across from 403rd Wing headquarters.

Personnel who received mail at the Mail Bag now receive it at the Levitow Training Support Facility.



Photo by Kemberly Groue  
Staff Sgt. Pat Malone, left, Senior Airman Thomas Gerhart and Airman 1st Class Matthew Osborn, 81st Civil Engineer Squadron, scrape up flooring inside the Keesler Community Center.

There's normal mail service in East Falcon, West Falcon, Thrower Park and dormitories.

## Medical center

Keesler Medical Center is closed until further notice.

For medical care information, see page 24.

The Gulfport Naval Construction Battalion Center, about 10 miles west of the base, is seeing some of Keesler's patients.

## Pharmacy

The Keesler Medical Center pharmacy and satellite pharmacy are closed.

For alternate prescription procedures, see page 24.



Air Force photo  
A worker removes debris from the Keesler Commissary. The Keesler Community Center is being transformed into a commissary to replace the store destroyed by Katrina Aug. 29.



Photo by Kemberly Groue  
Children and staff at the child development center enjoy breakfast together. The center was back in operation Monday.

Destroyed belongings are piled up along the side of the street in the Pinehaven base housing area. Hurricane Katrina filled these homes with up to 8 feet of storm water.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



# Base housing residents urged to contact housing office upon returning to Keesler

By Senior Airman Sarah Stegman

Keesler News staff

Military family housing took a direct beating from Hurricane Katrina and left more than half of the units uninhabitable.

"Out of our 1,820 total units 1,200 were assignable before the storm and only 850 are now habitable after the storm," said Mike Reese, housing flight chief.

As military personnel begin to return to their military family housing unit, they should check in with the military housing office, which is temporarily located at Chapel 1, next to the dental clinic and to the west of the Sablich Center.

"By checking in with us, it helps to keep count of which units have been inspected and which have damage," Mr. Reese explained.

When residents do go back to their units a safety assessment should be done.

Walk around the entire exterior of the unit to look for broken windows, downed trees and electrical lines on or around the house, sink holes in the yard and missing siding blocking doorways or windows.

In the interior residents should immediately leave if gas is smelled, and call 374-0003. If the unit was flooded above electrical lines, don't use electrical outlets.

Check the ceiling for leaks, and check all lights, appliances and plumbing.

"Base housing and off-base residents need to be aware that their (base allowance for housing) stops as soon as they come back to Keesler from their safe haven," Mr. Reese stressed. Off-base residents currently residing on base do not receive BAH either.

Portable-on-demand-storage containers are also available at the housing office for those who have salvageable items from their homes, but have found their units to be no longer habitable.

Both permanent party and non prior service student dormitories are being used for military members whose homes on and off base are unlivable.

Returning dorm residents need to check in with the consolidated dormitory management office located in Building 4904 on M. Street. Latex gloves, cleaning supplies and wet vacuums are available for use at CDMO.

"Dorm residents need to take responsibility of their building and police the area, including the courtyards, dayrooms and laundry rooms, for suspicious activity," said Master Sgt. Dave McCune, unaccompanied housing manager. "If something out of the ordinary is noticed, call the security forces law enforcement desk (377-3040)."

For more information about military family housing, call 377-9741.



Elizabeth Budz, wife of Lt. Col. George Budz, 81st Contracting Squadron, tries to salvage items from her Bay Ridge home. More than half of all base housing units are uninhabitable.

# RED HORSE team moves base cleanup forward

By Louis Arana-Barradas

## Air Force Print News

Staff Sgt. Art Hughes brushed wood chips and sawdust from his black T-shirt, which smelled of sweat and fresh pine.

After cutting down trees all morning, it was break time, so he grabbed a bottle of water and gulped it down.

Across the street, the rest of “Youngblood’s Crew” kept working. The crew, led by Master Sgt. Randy Youngblood, was clearing part of the mess Hurricane Katrina left behind on Pinelawn Street in Bay Ridge military family housing.

“We have crews working at some other housing areas,” said Sergeant Hughes, a pavements and equipment Airman with the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron from Hurlburt Field, Fla.

“We’re trying to work toward each other and finish this cleanup.”

Cleaning up Keesler, which has been a massive undertaking, is going well. The RED HORSE team arrived the day after Hurricane Katrina devastated this training base to help base civil engineers with cleanup work. They brought their heavy equipment and know-how with them.

A half block down Pinelawn, Airman 1st Class Seth Stucker watched the RED HORSE crew at work.

He said he is glad the team is on base. Katrina destroyed up to 1,000 of the base’s 1,800 houses. But the storm spared his home, which escaped with only a leaky roof — now covered by a huge blue plastic tarp. Still, the medical technician lost a couch and all his clothes.

Seeing Airmen with red hats at work meant a lot to him.

“They’re not from here, but they’ve been coming out and spending 12 hours a day cutting logs and clearing our streets,” said the Airman from Chittenango, N.Y. He arrived



Photo by Master Sgt. Efrain Gonzalez

**Staff Sgt. Arthur Hughes, 823rd RED HORSE Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla., uses a chainsaw to remove fallen trees that destroyed nearly 1,000 of 1,800 base homes.**

here five months ago and evacuated his wife before the storm. Since his house did not flood, he moved back in.

“It’s refreshing that people will give their time to help others. I’m really thankful,” he said.

A RED HORSE advance team arrived at the flooded base Aug. 30. To get here,

they had to cut their way through the debris that blocked the roads. At the base, there was no electrical power and people were still huddled in shelters. The next day, the rest of the 91-person volunteer team convoyed here by truck from their base in northern Florida.

“It was complete chaos

when we arrived,” said Sergeant Hughes, who is from Beatrice, Neb. “But now this place is starting to look like an Air Force base again.”

That is because RED HORSE engineers are doing what they specialize in, clearing massive amounts of debris, said Chief Master Sgt. Mark Lewis.

His Airmen first cleared the main parts of the base. Then they cleared four on-base housing areas and five off-base housing areas.

“We haul away almost 3,000 tons of debris each day,” said the chief from Danville, Va. But 10 days after they began their work, they are still at it — though they have cleaned up more of the base at this stage than expected, the chief said. So Sergeant Youngblood’s crew keeps working.

“They want to get their work done, and then they want to go home,” Chief Lewis said.

On Pinelawn, part of the crew pulled branches out of broken and shattered trees. Others used noisy chain saws to cut up trees felled by the storm.

A front-end loader scraped the sand-covered street as it scooped up a pile of brush, tree trunks and all sorts of debris and loaded it onto a huge dump truck. And on a “man-lift,” Airmen worked to pull a huge oak tree off the roof of a house.

Everyone helps, and when they are not doing their main jobs, team members help where needed.

That includes the mechanics, services and other support Airmen the team uses.

“When they put on the red hat, they’re all part of this team,” Chief Lewis said.

Staff Sgt. Darius Kersch, who is from Pensacola, Fla., is a “limb puller” when he isn’t doing heating, ventilation and air conditioning work.

He helped base civil engineers get their HVAC systems back on line when he first arrived, then he joined a cleanup crew.

“This place was truly a disaster,” Sergeant Kersch said. “So we had to make a difference.”

Chief Lewis said some team members also helped

Please see **Cleanup**, Page 9

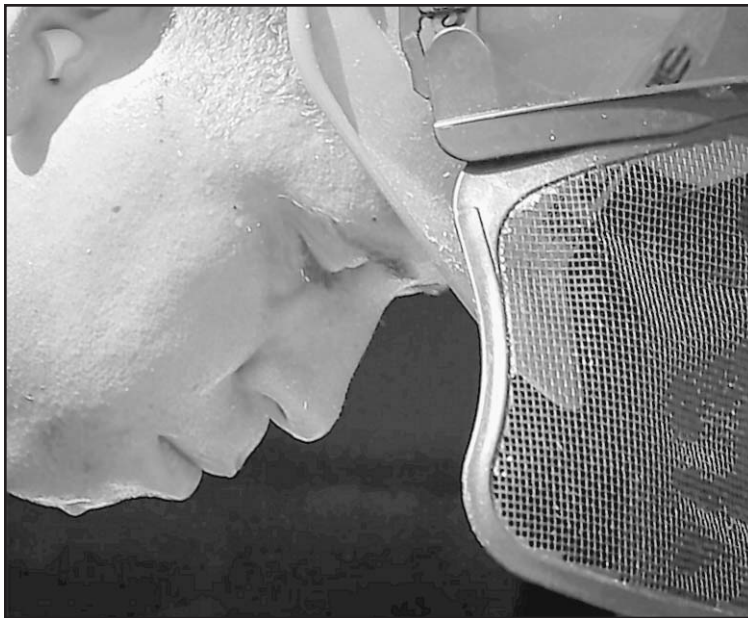


Photo by Master Sgt. Efrain Gonzalez

**Staff Sgt. David Torres, 823rd RED HORSE Squadron, tightens and adjusts his chainsaw before starting another day of clearing and removing fallen trees from base housing.**

## Cleanup,

from Page 8

technicians here get their power grid back on line. They also fixed and moved generators to critical facilities.

The team is self-sufficient, the chief said. It set up a small camp complete with tents and dining facility and brought all their own heavy equipment and generators.

To keep it supplied, 18 other Airmen drive tractor trailers back and forth from Hurlburt bringing needed equipment, supplies and materials.

The team even adopted a small black mutt they named Katrina.

"We'll be here as long as needed," Chief Lewis said.

Sergeant Kersch said he is glad to stay. In the past year, he volunteered to help at bases after Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis, but here it was personal.

Stationed here three years ago, he still has friends in the local community.

"I have to give something back because people here were good to me," he said.

The teams keep motivated with competition.

Sergeant Hughes said they measure how much work they

do at the end of the day by the amount of fuel each team uses.

"So we kind of talk with the other crews and see how much fuel they're using in their saws and compare it to how much you're using," he said.

After a long day of work, "Youngblood's Crew" uses about 10 gallons of fuel — enough to claim the "top crew" award, Sergeant Hughes said.

The competition is motivating. But the team is making a difference, which is "what we're all about," Sergeant Hughes said.

Though not yet finished, the team has done its job. It has helped Keesler get back on its feet quicker so its people can continue rebuilding and helping with relief operations in the Gulf Coast.

But the best part about what the team has done, Sergeant Hughes said, is giving people here "part of their lives back" and a chance to start over.

The squadron departed Keesler Sept. 14.

Staff Sgt. Lee Smith, Keesler News staff, contributed to this report.



Photo by 1st Lt. Brady Smith

From left, Staff Sgt. Steve Czelusniak, Airman 1st Class Josh Arnett and Senior Airman Christian Dixon, all members of the 97th Air Expeditionary Group deployed to Keesler, wrap up goods to be palletized for a humanitarian mission Sept. 9.

## Outside agencies provide assistance to Keesler in aftermath of Katrina

By 1st Lt. Brady Smith  
and Staff Sgt. Lee Smith

81st Training Wing Public Affairs

Agencies from around the United States have come into Keesler to help restore the training base to pre-Katrina shape.

The 823rd RED HORSE flight from Hurlburt Field, Fla., arrived Aug. 30 to help with debris removal and helped with the base's electrical needs, including heating, ventilation and air conditioning.

"By looking around at what has already been accomplished ... one can see that the practice of 'service before self' is alive in the Air Force, federal and state agencies."

— Col. Medler

The 56th Civil Engineer Squadron from Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., arrived here Sept. 9 to help with the base infrastructure.

The Luke civil engineers

also helped many local residents clean and rebuild their homes on their down time.

The Hammer Ace team, made up of communicators who can provide telecommu-

nications capabilities to isolated areas, deployed here the day before the storm and provided more than 100 hours of humanitarian calls just hours after the storm hit the base

and rendered power and telephone lines unusable.

Hammer Ace members, stationed at Scott AFB, Ill., and Langley AFB, Va., also provided support for the base's humanitarian missions to shelters off-base.

Sheppard AFB, Texas, accepted 1,000 students from Keesler as personnel officials there will decide their future. Eglin AFB, Fla., also took in

See **Agencies**, Page 11



Photo by 1st Lt. Brady Smith

Staff Sgt. Rebecca Pendleton, 97th Air Expeditionary Group, uses a pallet mover to transport goods to be palletized for a humanitarian mission off-base.

## Agencies,

from Page 10

evacuees from Keesler.

The 97th Air Expeditionary Group, deployed to Keesler on Sept. 6, continues to execute its mission of helping relief agencies, but has also recently received orders to redeploy forces.

The group, comprised of 250 Airmen from 14 separate Air Force installations and more than 20 career fields, is beginning to redeploy some of its people back to their home station as needs from relief agencies level off.

"We are projecting to have about 150 return to their home station this week, which will take us down to about 100 people in the AEG," said Lt. Col. Karl Freerks, 97th AEG deputy commander.

"We anticipate that the entire group will be completely redeployed from here by Oct. 6, but that is still undetermined," Col. Freerks said. "Most likely, there may be a few of us that remain behind to support Keesler Airmen as needed."

"As the group redeploy, we are proud of the small contribution we have made to relief efforts here and in the surrounding communities, but we have also been humbled by this experience," said Col. Linda Medler, 97th AEG commander.

"By looking around at what has already been accomplished by us and the base, and what is being accomplished every day, one can see that the practice of 'service before self' is alive in the Air Force, federal and state agencies," she said.

# Baby arrives during C-section by flashlight

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News staff

Hurricane Katrina's awesome power couldn't keep a baby from making her debut at Keesler Medical Center during a cesarean section illuminated by a ring of flashlights.

"Our team delivered a healthy, robust baby girl — definitely not a shrinking violet," said Maj. Betsy Majma, a nurse anesthetist. "She came into the world screaming, even before she was fully delivered. Except for the venue and circumstances, it was a routine C-section — 23 minutes, skin to skin."

The Aug. 29 birth was coordinated by a team of about 50 medics and support personnel who prepared the makeshift delivery room, conducted the surgery and ensured the health and safety of the mother and child, according to Maj. (Dr.) Jaye Adams, supervising physician.

The woman was 39 weeks pregnant and had been scheduled for a repeat C-section Aug. 30. When she began having contractions and her water broke while she sheltered with other expectant mothers at Keesler Medical Center, the mom and the medical team had decisions to make.

"We couldn't air-evac her out of here because of the high winds," Major Adams said. "She could have proceeded with a vaginal delivery, but because of her earlier C-section, she had been advised to have the same procedure again. There are certain risks involved with any surgical procedure, even under the best circumstances, and we didn't have optimal conditions. She opted for the C-section."

When the medical center's generators flooded at the height of the storm and left the facility without power, an alternate location for the delivery had to be found. A room in the intensive care unit was chosen.

Unlike the delivery room, the ICU had windows where the afternoon light provided some illumination. The team needed power for the bovie device that's used to cauterize bleeding during surgery, so civil engineers ran a cable from an emergency generator in another room that was being used for another patient's ventilator.

"We had to push the equipment we needed down the hall from the operating room to ICU — about 500 feet in the pitch-black darkness," said Senior Airman Shantra Nuehring, an operating room technician who assisted with the delivery.

After ICU personnel cleared furniture and equipment out of the room, the floor was scrubbed and Airman Nuehring and other technicians cleaned



Photo by Maj. Betsy Majma

Industrial flashlights are used to illuminate the surgical field for the baby's C-section delivery.

"Our team delivered a healthy, robust baby girl  
— definitely not a shrinking violet.  
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23 minutes, skin to skin."

— Major Majma

the walls with antiseptic wipes to sanitize the area as much as possible.

Second Lt. Leah Nielson, an obstetrical nurse, was one of the medics who cared for the patient.

"I tried to calm and soothe her anxiety and make sure she understood exactly what we planned to do," Lieutenant Nielson said. "She was a real trooper — she did everything we asked her to do."

"The only concern the patient seemed to have was that she felt very exposed in a room with so many windows," Airman Nuehring said. "We wanted to give her

some sense of privacy, so we taped up sheets over some of the windows."

Capt. (Dr.) Darren Pittard cared for the woman while she was in labor. Two other physicians in Keesler's residency program, Capts. Andrew Allen and Anna Flinn, did the C-section.

"The preparations were a carefully coordinated effort," Major Majma said. "We didn't do her spinal until everything was checked out and ready. We draped her, prepped her and boom-boom-boom, they got that little girl out."

The tiny room was packed with medics for the delivery, some holding industrial flashlights to provide as much illumination as possible. There wasn't room for the father to be present for the birth, so he waited down the hall with the couple's other daughter.

The darkness, heat, humidity and lack of ventilation presented significant challenges to everyone involved.

"It was so humid that our charting paper felt like damp toilet paper and started falling apart," Lieutenant Nelson said.

"We kept fanning the patient to try to keep her cool under the heavy drapes," Major Majma said. "Some people felt faint and nauseous. Afterward, we were all totally saturated — underclothes and overclothes."

"We were astounded that there was no sign of infection after the delivery," Lieutenant Nelson said. "We gave the mom plenty of antibiotics and she never spiked a temperature."

"Considering the circumstances and the challenges of the delivery, I'm really proud of the level of care our team was able to provide," Major Adams said. "I've been involved in more than a thousand deliveries during my medical career, and this is definitely one I'll never forget."

## Riders on the storm

Al Watkins and Stanley Morgan, 81st Civil Engineer Squadron, witnessed the rising storm surge near Dolan Hall at the height of Hurricane Katrina as they responded to a call at Keesler Medical Center.

Photo by Stanley Morgan



## NCO defuses gas station crisis

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News staff

Gasoline shortages and frustrated motorists are common in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

In one instance, a Keesler noncommissioned officer's cool head prevented a potential disaster from erupting.

A long line of motorists was waiting as Staff Sgt. LaShawndra Singleton pulled into a gas station near Montgomery, Ala., Aug. 29. She was headed back to Keesler after evacuating to Alabama.

Sergeant Singleton, 81st Mission Support Squadron, topped off her vehicle's tank and filled a gas can for her trip.



**Sergeant Singleton**

"People coming out of the station said that they were only letting you get \$10 worth, even if you already paid," the Ohio native said. "After I paid for my gas, I heard a man telling someone to get up and don't make any movements other than rising up. I heard a female saying that she wouldn't, but please don't do this."

"As I got closer, I saw a man pointing a gun at an elderly woman," said Sergeant Singleton, who was in uniform. "The man was backing up, so I jumped in front of the woman. I told him that he didn't want to do this, and he said all he wanted was enough gas to get his family north."

"I told him I could give him money, but he said that the gas station was only letting people get \$10 worth of gas now, and he needed gas," she said. "I told him that I was trying to get to the Gulf Coast to help, and by doing this, I can't help him or the people down there."

"Then he asked me if I was ready to die, and I said if I did, I knew I had God with me," the sergeant said. "I told him I had five gallons of gas that he could have."

As she opened the trunk, she asked him to throw the bullets in the trash and keep the gun if he was scared, but not to make matters worse. He told her that he just wanted gas, and asked where she was from. When she said she was from Biloxi, he told her about the terrible destruction Hurricane Katrina had inflicted on south Mississippi.

After the man walked away with her gas can, Sergeant Singleton checked on the crying woman who thanked her.

She pulled onto the interstate, but had to pull off on the shoulder because she couldn't stop shaking.

"It wasn't until I got to Mobile (Ala.) that my nerves had gotten back right," Sergeant Singleton said.

She credited her deployment to Iraq last year for enabling her to maintain her composure in a stressful situation.

## Couple leaves shelter to exchange vows

By Staff Sgt. Lee Smith

Keesler News staff

Five days after Hurricane Katrina dramatically changed many lives in the Gulf Coast region, a couple here began a new chapter in their own lives.

Tech. Sgt. Daryn McMullen, 335th Training Squadron, and his girlfriend of three years, LaVerne, exchanged wedding vows Sept. 3 outside of Wolfe Hall, one of the seven shelters used to house people at Keesler for the hurricane.

Guests of the bride and groom, all who shared a shelter with the couple, dressed for the occasion in the most fashionable way. The groomsmen wore reflective safety belts while the bridesmaids wore reflective safety vests.

Sergeant McMullen wore his battle dress uniform accented by a makeshift bow tie made out of yellow caution tape, while his bride wore a yellow dress.

Sergeant McMullen said the wedding was made even more special because the people he had been with through the hurricane were part of the special day.

"I've shared a lot with these folks over the last eight days," Sergeant McMullen said. "We all survived the storm together. This couldn't have gone any better."

Mrs. McMullen said the wedding was originally planned for Sept. 8, but she and Sergeant McMullen decided having it a few days early wouldn't make a difference.

"We had the marriage license, and we could have gone to a justice of the peace, but we both figured why wait? Let's do it right now," she said.

"This was a memorable and special day for both of us," Sergeant McMullen said. "This will be a year we will never forget."

Chaplain (Capt.) Randy Sellers of the 81st Training Wing performed the ceremony that made the vows official.

"I've seen miracles happen during this storm, and now I have seen two people joined together in holy matrimony," Chaplain Sellers said. "This is a great time for these two people."



Courtesy photo

The McMullens were married Sept. 3 outside of Wolfe Hall, where they sheltered with hundreds of other Keesler people during Hurricane Katrina.



Photo by Master Sgt. Dan Oberly

**Capt. Tracey Gosser, 81st Medical Operations Squadron, removes glass from 5-year-old Alexes Wisniewski's foot while her mom, Patter, looks on. Captain Gosser is one of the Keesler medics who visited nearby hurricane shelters to provide medical care.**

# Keesler reaches out to community neighbors

By Staff Sgt. Lee Smith

**Keesler News staff**

Even with some Keesler personnel displaced due to Hurricane Katrina, the base has extended a hand to surrounding communities through humanitarian efforts.

The base has led humanitarian missions with medical and chapel personnel, as well as missions to distribute meals ready-to-eat and bottled water.

As of Monday, the base had 19 medical missions and treated 268 patients with 60 medical and chapel personnel, according to 1st Lt. Schavonne Fludd, 335th Training Squadron.

The base has also been on 32 missions to off-base locations, ranging from water and MREs to milk, food and other supplies. Support for these missions has included Keesler Airmen, as well as Navy and Marine Corps students stationed here.

The 97th Air Expeditionary Group, here since Sept. 6, has been performing humanitarian missions to off-base shelters as Keesler personnel begin to return to their normal jobs. The 97th AEG expects to be at Keesler until Oct. 6.

"We're still trying to get our facilities up and running on the base, but this is just one way we can do something for our local community, which has done so much for us over the years," said Brig. Gen. William Lord, 81st Training Wing commander.



Photo by Kemberly Groue

**Maj. (Dr.) Bradley Hood, left, 81st MDOS, is assisted by James Aemisegger, a nurse from Spring Hill Regional Hospital in Florida, with preparations to administer tetanus shots at Biloxi Regional Medical Center Sept. 8.**



Photo by Kemberly Groue

**Airman Basic Jared Duran, left, and Airman Nicholas Stewart, 81st Military Working Flight, unload juice and water donations at a D'Iberville distribution center Sept. 12.**



**Airman 1st Class John Fanning, 81st MWF, stocks milk for hurricane victims. The milk was donated by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church in Ocean Springs Sept. 10.**

Photo by Kemberly Groue

# Home and away

## 403rd Wing continues mission while dealing with Katrina damage

By Tech. Sgt. James Pritchett

403rd Wing Public Affairs

The Air Force Reserve Command's 403rd Wing continues to support missions while reconstituting efforts at the unit's home station at Keesler.

"We deployed all our aircraft to Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., and continued supporting the hurricane reconnaissance mission without any missed taskings," said Brig. Gen. Richard Moss, wing commander.

At Keesler, some of the unit's facilities sustained damage, including the wing's headquarters. Many offices, such as customer service, the military personnel flight, finance and military pay have moved to alternate buildings until repairs can be made.

All Department of Defense civilians and air reserve technicians assigned to the wing were recalled recently and deemed mission essential. In addition to duties at Keesler, many were deployed with the unit's operations to Dobbins where the tactical airlift and hurricane reconnaissance missions are still ongoing.

The 403rd Wing members deployed to Dobbins, referred to as Detachment 1, were originally commanded by Lt. Col. James Linder. The number of troops is about 180, according to Lt. Col. Lloyd Hulsey, acting Det. 1 commander, although the number fluctuates daily.

While the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron continues to fly missions into Hurricane Rita from Dobbins, the 815th Airlift Squadron has maintained a hectic schedule as well, Colonel Hulsey said. The squadron continues flying Hurricane Katrina relief missions and supporting other airlift taskings, such as recovering 403rd Wing personnel and equipment from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

In addition to operations and maintenance, finance and services Airmen from the 403rd Wing are also working at Dobbins, augmenting the 94th Airlift Wing with support functions such as billeting. That unit has been especially busy because of the influx of 403rd Wing members.

The transition to operating from Dobbins went "very smoothly," according to Colonel Hulsey, because of the support Det. 1 members received from the 94th Airlift Wing and 22nd Air Force. "It was all done very well."

The first group of 403rd Wing Airmen arrived at Dobbins Aug. 31. They were part of a group of that had been previously operating from Ellington Field, Texas. The rest arrived the next day.

Lt. Col. Roger Gardner, who is coordinating Det. 1 current operations at Dobbins, echoed Colonel Hulsey's comments about the support received from the 94th AW and 22nd Air Force.

The colonel added that the family support and chaplain staffs there have been especially helpful for 403rd Wing members who lost their homes and possessions to Hurricane Katrina. The Dobbins chaplain's office has provided counseling for Det. 1 members, and other agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross have provided briefings as well.

"We're flying around the clock," Col. Garchner added. "Maintenance is equally challenged with its personnel, but is doing a great job providing aircraft for our missions."

The 403rd Wing members from support, maintenance and operations will continue to work from Dobbins until hurricane relief airlift and special missions at Keesler slow enough to allow bringing the aircraft home.

Arrive alive — watch how you drive.

# Geren surveys devastation, praises base for 'can-do' spirit

By Tech. Sgt. Dan Neely

81st Training Wing Public Affairs

The Air Force's top civilian got a closeup view of hurricane-battered Keesler Sept. 16.

Acting Secretary of the Air Force Pete Geren praised the "phenomenal" efforts of all who are helping restore the base while helping their community neighbors.

The secretary toured some of Keesler's hardest-hit areas, both from the ground and air, fielded questions from some of the base's most storm-afflicted Airmen and viewed ongoing efforts to restore the base's hallmark training mission.

"Keesler suffered extensive damage, but in spite of that, the total Air Force — active-duty, Guard and Reserve — have stepped up to the challenge and in many cases, in spite of very significant personal loss," he said. "Many men and women have lost their homes, their families are displaced, and yet they're not only meeting the needs of the Air Force, but reaching out to the local communities — trying to help the families that have suffered so badly off the base."

Escorted through the Katrina-devastated Pinehaven, Bay Ridge and Oak Park family housing areas, the secretary paused to meet Staff Sgt. Deanna Attaway, 81st Training Group, and survey her badly-damaged home. The military training leader seemed to represent many other base housing residents who had lost most, if not all, of their worldly possessions to Katrina.

"I was excited to see him visit, but I told him I wish it could have been under better circumstances," Sergeant Attaway said. "He asked me what it was like to have to deal with (the devastation), but I just said there's really no way to actually deal with it — you just have to pick up and move forward every day the best you can."

Other stops included the

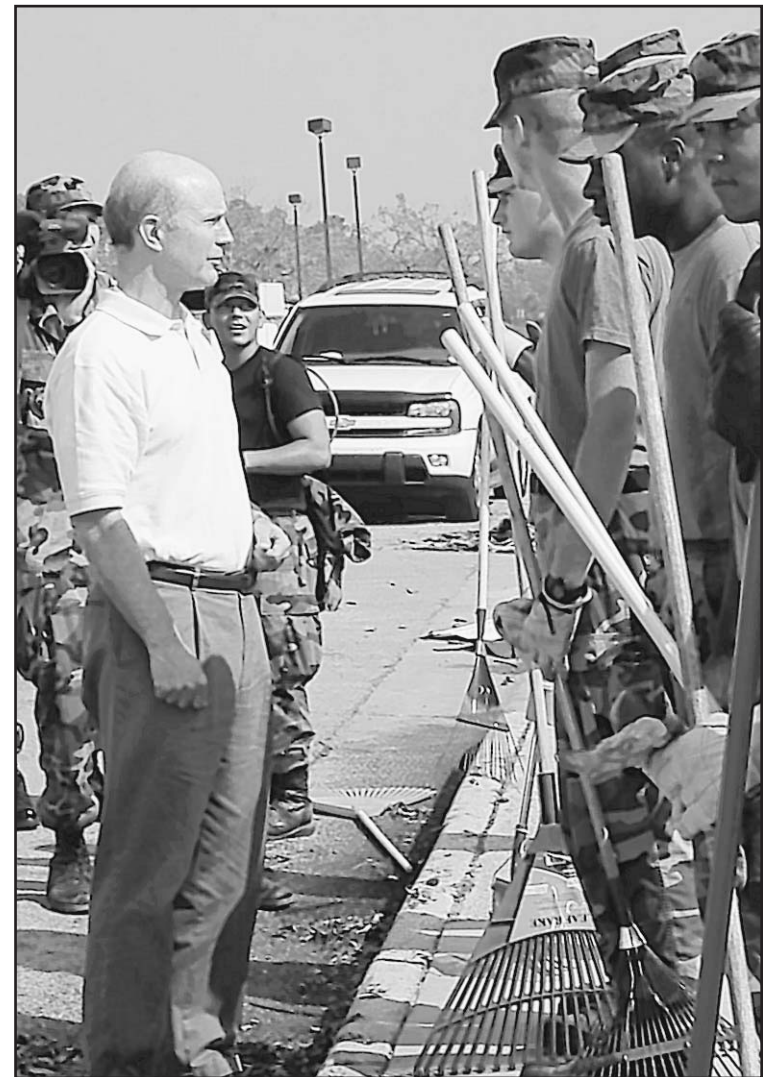


Photo by Kemberly Groue

**Secretary Geren visits with a clean-up crew of nonprior service students during one of his tour stops Friday.**

Levitow Training Support Facility, a primary hub of support services for storm-displaced Keesler people, a dining facility and a visit with a base beautification crew. The secretary continuously reassured Airmen that the Air Force would do its best to meet their needs during a uniquely stressful time in their lives.

"It's critically important the Air Force respond to the needs of Keesler and the needs of the community," Secretary Geren said. "Keesler is one of the most important facilities in the Air Force, and I'm particularly pleased to know that the training mission's moving ahead."

"Within a week we'll have 1,000 students back in training,

and we'll be on our way to getting Keesler back up and running — making a contribution that the Air Force depends on."

Summing up what he felt was most impressive during his visit, the secretary said he was inspired by Keesler's attitude and "can-do" spirit.

"I talked to some people who had suffered terrible personal loss, and yet they're proud to have an opportunity to serve their wingman," the secretary said. "They're really living the Air Force core values — particularly service before self. We're seeing that across Keesler and throughout the (Mississippi) Gulf Coast. The Air Force has certainly done itself proud, and the eyes of not just the country, but the whole world are on us."

# Training,

from Page 1

Keesler provides technical training for Airmen in almost 30 Air Forces specialties. Its instructors teach more than 500 supplemental courses, like upgrade training and professional military education.

In addition to air traffic control and electronic principles, other courses that came back on line this week are enlisted air crew training, weather and basic instructor courses.

Next week, the 81st TRG stands up the financial management, personnel, information management, computer maintenance, technical control and ground radio control courses.

The first 400 students to reenter training are the volunteers that stayed at the base to help with the massive clean-up effort after the storm. Friday, 350 more students arrived to join the continuing clean-up work, and they'll gradually begin training in groups of 150 each week.

Monday, other students began arriving via the normal technical training pipeline from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"We hope to take as many as 150 each Monday as we bring more training on line," Colonel Canaday commented.

Colonel Canaday said the Air Force hasn't decided if the 1,100 students evacuated to Sheppard AFB, Texas, after the storm will return for training here or retrain into new career fields. Some troops have already received their Air Force specialty because they were within days of graduation.

One alternative the Air Force is considering is sending Keesler instructors to Sheppard to allow the Airmen to finish their training there. But the colonel said the students might return to Keesler to finish training.

"Right now we're still discussing all that," she said.

Supplemental training done on the base is on hold for at least 90 days. Sixty percent of these students attend courses on temporary duty status from one week to one month.

"We don't have the facilities to bring in TDY students

## New leader for training

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News staff

Col. Deborah Van De Ven assumes command of the 81st Training Group from Col. Jessie Canaday, 5 p.m. Sept. 30 in front of the Levitow Training Support Facility.

Colonel Van De Ven, who becomes the leader of the Air Force's largest training group, comes to Keesler from the Pentagon, where she was chief of regional support operations for the Joint Staff.

After seven years as an enlisted aerospace control and warning systems officer, the colonel was commissioned through Officer Training School in 1981.

Col. Canaday, who retires at the ceremony with more than 25 years of active duty, has served as the 81st TRG commander since June 2003.

at this time," the colonel said.

Since the storm, billeting spaces are at a premium at Keesler. The base is housing Airmen and their families who lost their homes to the hurricane in dormitories. Hundreds of local, state and federal workers staging relief operations from Keesler partly fill the massive dormitory where students normally live. Before supplemental training can resume, these people must move out.

Training in the 81st Medical Group has been another integral part of Keesler's mission, but major damage to Keesler Medical Center has diverted graduate medical education and Phase II enlisted technician training to other locations.

"They need patients to work on, and we have no patients now," General Lord remarked. "We thought the building itself would be out of commission at least six months — the good news is that we may be able to restore outpatient services as early as 30 to 45 days."

The 81st TRG is eager to get back to business, but three of its facilities — the trainer development building and McClellan and Garrard halls — were severely damaged. They're closed right now and resources are being moved to other facilities.

Most training buildings need repairs to get back on line. The colonel said roof damage is common, but since it hasn't rained since the hurricane, repair crews have been able to put temporary roofs on the damaged buildings.

The one training building the hurricane didn't damage,

Vosler Hall, now houses the group's headquarters and that of the mission support group and training support squadron. Airmen are working to have it ready for the start of classes.

"We're just trying to get back to a normal routine," said Master Sgt. Laurie Jackson, the group's information management superintendent.

Sergeant Jackson said getting ready to train students is the top priority, but getting back into a training mood might take more than just having students and buildings. It's just as important to get people's attitudes back into work mode, she pointed out.

"They're sidetracked by all the stuff going on outside," she said, noting that 35 to 50 percent of group workers lost their homes to the storm.

But Colonel Canaday said Keesler people are adjusting more each day. Many have come to terms with their losses and have filed for insurance compensations. Most have also settled into new places to live — though in some cases temporarily.

The hurricane might have damaged Keesler, but didn't break it, the colonel insisted. People are willing and able to bring the base's vital mission back on line.

"We need to get back to work," she said. "It's important for the people and for the Air Force that the group get back on line, and then we'll give people time off to continue reconstituting their life."

Louis Arana-Barradas, Air Force Print News, and Susan Griggs, Keesler News staff, contributed to this report.

## Aid,

from Page 1

### Chapel

Services are Jewish, 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Fishbowl; Protestant, 8:30 and 11:30 a.m., Larcher Chapel; student services, 10 a.m. Sunday, Fishbowl; Catholic, 10 a.m. Sunday, Larcher Chapel; gospel service, 1 p.m. Sunday, Larcher Chapel; Latter Day Saints, 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Fishbowl.

The Fishbowl in the Levitow building is a hub for chapel, family support and life skills services. Chapel teams are deployed here to assist the staff.

Air Force chapels have donated about \$200,000 for hurricane relief. Disposition of funds is still being coordinated.

### Extended child care

Military and civilians affected who are eligible for on-base day care and work more than 50 hours a week are eligible for free or subsidized child care under the Air Force's extended duty child care program.

For more information, call 377-3189 or 5935.

### Civilian information

Civilians may call 1-800-307-3298 or visit <http://www.opm.gov> to connect with department or agency contacts and obtain information various benefits.

### Family support center

At the Levitow building, active-duty members can apply for Air Force Aid Society loans and get other information and referrals.

A retiree service center has set up in Thrower Park.

In Chapel 1, an annex is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays with clothing, food, baby and cleaning items for all ranks.

### Finance

The 81st Comptroller Squadron, relocated to the second floor of the Vosler Center, is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. working Fridays. For military and travel pay questions, call 377-7272 or 4212.

Evacuation voucher processing begins today, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Welch Theater, and continues Friday and Monday-Wednesday.

### Legal office

Aid is available 9 a.m. to

noon and 1-5 p.m. workdays in Room 246 in the Levitow building, but the office may be moved to Locker House.

For appointments, call 377-5404.

A claims briefing is 10 a.m. daily, with filing from 8 a.m. to noon.

### On-base medical care

The tent hospital east of Sablich Center offers routine medical care for active-duty members and dependents of active-duty members who live on base, 8-11 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. daily. Emergency care is available around the clock.

Care isn't available on base for retirees, their dependents and dependents of active-duty who live off base. See Tricare heading for more information.

### Pharmacy services

Keesler's pharmacy is operating out of a separate office at the Biloxi Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Refills are sent overnight to the Keesler pharmacy at the VA for pickup. There are no co-payments through Sept. 30.

Call 377-6360 or 1-800-443-6564 for refills in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. The toll-free line is still down for Louisiana customers yet, so they can call 1-228-377-6360.

Tricare is working with retail pharmacies to maintain customer access to prescription benefits.

For mail order pharmacy benefit information, call 1-866-363-8667. For questions about the retail pharmacy program, call 1-866-363-8779.

### TMO

The traffic management office in Room 211 of the Levitow building is open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For more information, call 377-0174, 1263, 7448 or 3147.

### Tricare

Beneficiaries affected by Hurricane Katrina don't need approval before seeing a medical provider outside the Tricare system. Co-payments are suspended until Sept. 30.

For more information, visit <http://www.Tricare.osd.mil> or call 1-800-363-2273.

### Uniforms

Base supply now has enough uniforms and boots for people who incurred losses during the storm.